



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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## Spring 2019

*Harvest lists are online.*

### Back Page Recipes

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*Find many more recipes on our website.*

### Thank You, CS-Aid Donors!

Thanks to everyone who has donated to our CS-Aid program, we've been able to offer half-price produce shares to those in need. With your support, we plan to keep the program going!

### COVID-19 Updates

Although the stay-at-home order has been lifted, we will continue to operate under the rigorous safety protocols we put into place two months ago. We ask that you continue to:

- Stay home if you or someone in your household is sick.
- Keep a distance of 6 feet between you and others.
- Try to only send one person to pick up your CSA share.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Wear a mask.

Thank you so much for helping us to stay healthy and serve our community!

## Flower Power: Now Offering Organic Local Flowers!



Simply put, the cut flower industry isn't so flowery. Given what we know about the chemicals, human rights issues, and environmental damage perpetuated by the industrial flower industry, it seems inappropriate to give these same flowers to new moms, the sick and elderly, and those who we care about most. Luckily we have local flower growers like **Laurel's Florals** (@laurels\_florals) who provide us with locally grown flowers that are better for humanity, the earth, and our loved ones. Laurel grows all of her flowers organically on a plot of land at Sleeping Frog Farms in Cascabel, where she also works as a produce farmer. You can find Laurel's beautiful bouquets at the CSA Shop every Tuesday and Wednesday from 4 – 7 p.m.

## All About Armenian Cucumbers

If you're new to the Tucson CSA, you may be a bit overwhelmed by the strange-looking cucumbers that show up in your share in the summer. They certainly don't look like the tame, unobtrusive cucumbers you're used to seeing in the supermarket! And their striped varieties go limp so quickly in the refrigerator! But appearances can be deceiving. We are privileged to receive from Farmer Frank what are known as Armenian cucumbers, specifically adapted to our desert conditions. They come in two varieties: the pale green ribbed variety and the darker green striped and crooked variety. Not surprisingly, the latter is also known as snake melon. The online Cook's Thesaurus notes they are "hard to find, but one of the best-regarded slicing cucumbers." Not hard to find for us!

According to a report by the Environmental Working Group, commercial cucumbers are one of the top twelve most pesticide-laden produce items. The wax applied to commercial cucumbers, apples, and many other produce items is made of petroleum oils. Not only does it seal in moisture, prolonging shelf life, it also seals in pesticides.

Armenian cucumbers don't need to be peeled or seeded, and despite their limp appearance, you'll notice that they're still crisp when sliced. As soon as you slice one, the perfumed aroma begs you to take a bite. And when you do, you won't be disappointed. You'll be amazed at how little it resembles the flavorless, tough-skinned varieties you're used to. You could use slices of this cucumber to perfume and brighten mixed drinks, lemonade, and even plain water, or simply eat it with a light sprinkling of salt.

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## RECIPES

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### **Agua Fresca de Pepino (Cucumber-Lime Drink)**

Amy Schwemm, Tucson CSA

Our gigantic Armenian cucumbers are ideal for this most refreshing summer drink. Easy to make and to drink! It will use up your CSA cucumbers faster than you can get them.

1 large Armenian cucumber or several smaller cucumbers  
1/2 to 1 cup lime juice  
1-2 cups water  
1/4 cup sugar, agave syrup, simple syrup, or other sweetener

Juice the whole cucumber (with skin and seeds), or blend and strain it. Add lime juice, water, and sugar. Serve chilled. For added zest, sprinkle with chopped mint or Stevia leaf. Makes approximately 2 quarts. Substitution: instead of lime juice and sugar, you can use 2 tablespoons of frozen concentrated lime juice per pint of cucumber juice.

### **Nopal-Pineapple Smoothie**

Susie Qashu, Tucson CSA

For each serving:

1 Cup cold fresh grapefruit juice  
½ prickly pear pad, cleaned of stickers  
2 Cups chopped frozen pineapple

Add grapefruit, nopal, and frozen pineapple to a blender and blend until the smoothie is well-blended. Serve in a large glass and enjoy.

### **Agua Fresca de Sandia (Watermelon drink)**

Philippe, Tucson CSA

½ small watermelon  
1/4 cup mint or basil leaves (optional)  
1 cup water  
the juice from 2 limes or lemons  
1/2 cup simple syrup (2 tablespoons sugar dissolved in 1/2 cup of hot water)

Note: instead of fresh citrus juice and simple syrup, you can use ¼ cup frozen juice concentrate (such as Minute Maid) dissolved in 1 cup of water.

Remove rind and cut watermelon flesh into cubes. Place watermelon cubes and mint in a blender with 1 cup of water and blend until the seeds have broken down. Note: you can remove the seeds beforehand if you prefer, but blending the seeds with the flesh gives the drink a slightly creamy texture. Pour the obtained juice into a pitcher, through a strainer. Add citrus juice, simple syrup, and stir. Chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour before serving in glasses with some ice cubes. Note: the pulp will separate and sink to the bottom after a while; that's ok, most people prefer to drink the clear liquid only.

### **Grilled Nopalitos and Green Onion Tacos**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Grilled cactus tends to be less slimy than boiled or steamed cactus. If you are squeamish about the gummy factor, then this is the way to go. Plus, the slight burn on the green onions and cactus makes the dish taste more complex and delicious.

1 bunch green onions  
2-4 cactus pads  
1 tablespoon oil  
1 tablespoon balsamic or red wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon ground oregano  
1 teaspoon chile flakes  
Salt and pepper to taste  
6 corn tortillas  
Goat cheese or other mild white cheese

Mix together oil, vinegar, chile, oregano and salt and pepper. Rub mixture over onions and cactus and let marinate while grill heats. When grill is hot place pads and green onions over an area with medium high heat. After three minutes remove onions and flip cactus pads. Cook pads until beginning to brown and slightly charred around edges. Remove from grill and slice into long strips. Serve wrapped in tortilla with green onions and cheese.

### **Roasted Nopales, Potato and Bean Salad**

Dana Rosenstein, Tucson CSA

1 share CSA beans, cleaned, soaked and cooked  
1-2 shares CSA potatoes  
1 share CSA nopales, spines scraped or singed off  
1 teaspoon cumin  
1 teaspoon chili powder, or to taste  
2 teaspoons salt  
Green onions  
Cilantro

Preheat oven to 375. Dice CSA potatoes and nopales. place in a large bowl with cumin, chili powder and salt to taste. I used 8 small red potatoes and 2 cactus pads. Stir well with some olive oil. Place on baking sheet and roast for 20-25 min or until the potatoes are cooked and the nopales are dry to your liking. Stir at ~10 min mark. Return potatoes and nopales to the bowl and mix with cooked, drained beans. If you like, whip equal parts olive oil and lemon/lime juice with salt and pepper as a dressing. garnish with (or stir in) cilantro or green onions if you like. Can be served as a hot or cold salad or as a burrito filling.